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BRAVE GUY

By DOROTHY BELLE FLANAGAN

Carlo sat on the curbstone. There was a rose from a funeral lying in the gutter. Carlo stretched his short arm towards it. The arm did not reach. Carlo scooted himself down nearer the corner. He picked up the rose. It smelled beautiful. He buried his nose in it. It smelled beautiful. It was pink and soft. He smoothed its petals with his stubby little fingers.

The nigger cop was standing on the corner lazily swinging his club. He polished his buttons with the other arm. A hunky white man chewing a cigar was talking to him. Carlo did not pay any attention to them. He smelled the beautiful pink rose.

The white man said something about Petie. Carlo twisted his head around quickly. His big black eyes poked into the crevice between the white man's coat and his vest. Something shined in there like the nigger cop's buttons. Carlo held the rose stem clenched tight in one dirty chubby hand. His ears ached with listening.

"You sho' a brave guy," said the nigger cop.

The hunky white man guffawed modestly. "Naw, I ain't," he said. "Pete Corallo's just a wop like any of the others. He's just got 'em all buffaloed."

"Ah wouldn' fool with him none," said the nigger cop.

The hunky white man guffawed loudly and chewed on his big cigar. "I'm not afraid of no kid wop," he said. He bit on the cigar. "I'm gonna get him and I'm gonna get him right," he said. "He's through. We've had

enough trouble with that wop. I'm gonna get him." He slapped his hip pocket. "If there's any shooting done you know who's gonna do it."

"You sho' a brave guy," said the nigger cop.

Carlo scooted quiet, quiet along the curbstone. He darted his head around painfully to see if the white man and nigger cop had noticed him. They were still talking.

Carlo smiled softly to himself. They would not know who the dirty little Italian boy sitting under their noses on the curbstone was. The nigger cop might know. But the nigger cop was too busy swinging his club and polishing his buttons and listening to the white man to notice.

Carlo stood up from the curbstone. He still held the rose tight in his left hand. He ran fast as a whip down the street to the pool room. He sneaked around to the back entrance where Pete always went in. There were two men coming out. Carlo slipped in through their crack of the door.

Carlo stood inside the door and blinked. The smoke got in his eyes. The lights with their green cases blared at him. The noise shouted at him.

He saw Sam, who ran the pool hall. Sam had on a sweaty shirt with blue garters around his arms. He was smoking a cigar and leaning against the table. Men were playing at the table. Carlo went timidly over to Sam. He pulled at Sam's trouser leg.

"Where's Petie?" asked Carlo. "Where's Petie?"

Sam didn't pay any attention. Carlo kicked him on the shin.

Sam looked down at him. Sam rubbed his shin. "What you want, Carlo?" he asked.

Carlo's black eyes grew blacker.

"Where's Petie?" he whispered.

A man by the table grabbed Carlo's shoulder and swung him around. It hurt. "What you want to know

for?" the man asked sharply. He bent his dirty face into Carlo's. Tears filled Carlo's eyes.

"Leave the keed alone," said Sam. He pulled off the man.

The man wiped his arm across his forehead. "He's Pete's brudder," Sam said.

"What he want to come in here for asking that?" the man said. His face was white under the dirt.

"Pull yourself togedder," said Tony Chestino to the man.

"Where's Pete?" whimpered Carlo.

"He's safe," said Sam. "You better go home and eat your supper before you get a licking."

Carlo choked back the sobs. "Where's Pete?" he whispered to Sam.

"He's all right, keed," the dirty man said. "You chase on home and don' come in here scaring us again."

"Pull yourself togedder," swore Tony. "You'd think you croaked the cop instead of Pete."

"Shut up!" screamed the man.

"Pete, he got nerve," said Mike Lepetino. "He a brave guy. You scared. You yellow. Pete ought to had more sense than take you wid him last night."

"You shut up!" yelled the man.

"You go home, Carlo," said Sam. "Here." He took a stick of gum out of a case. "You go home. You no worry about Pete. He all right."

He pushed Carlo into the front of the pool hall. Carlo stumbled to the door and kicked it open with his knee. He scrubbed the tears away with his dirty hand. He put the gum in his left pocket. He put the rose carefully in the upper pocket of his coverall. He went out on to the street.

The sun was down. The street lamp was a yellow flower. The store windows were black faces and yellow

faces. He darted across the street and up the hill to his house.

He turned into the rickety gate. He went up the sagging steps. He avoided the one that always ran splinters into his bare feet. He saw a black hunky shadow in the front room. He stole down the steps and went around to the back door.

Annie was cooking the soup. He wasn't late for supper. He went up to Annie and took hold of her skirt. "Where's Petie, Annie?" he asked.

Annie clapped her hand over his mouth. "Hush!" she said.

She tiptoed to the door and peered into the front room. She came back to Carlo. "Hush," she said. "You no say nuttin' 'bout Pete now."

Carlo's eyes blackened with tears. Annie went back to the soup.

"Where's Mudder?" sobbed Carlo.

"Hush!" commanded Annie again. "You keep still, Carlo. A cop, he's in there."

Carlo stole to the doorway. Fadder was sitting in a chair stroking his moustaches. His face was like a blank wall. Johnnie and Joe were sitting on the floor near Fadder's chair. Their eyes were fastened innocently on the man. The hunky man was chewing a little bit of cigar and his face was mean.

The man saw Carlo. "Come here, you!" he ordered. Carlo crossed to his Fadder's knee and leaned against it.

"Where's your mother?" the man shot out.

Carlo shrugged, his big eyes fastened innocently on the man.

"Is she sick?"

Carlo's heart bumped but he shrugged again.

"She een the hos-peet-al," said Fadder. "I tell you she een the hos-peet-al."

Carlo trembled.

"I tell you you're lying," said the man. "What hospital?"

Fadder shrugged. Johnnie and Joe shrugged. Carlo shrugged.

"She's with Pete," said the man, scowling fiercely. "That's where she is. And when I get him I'll get her too. She'll go to jail along with him, see? Unless you're going to tell me where she is."

"She een the hos-peat-al," repeated Fadder, stroking his moustaches.

The hunky man stood up. "All right!" he said. "All right. But I'm telling you, that's all, I'm telling you." He went out the door and down the steps.

Carlo clung to his Fadder. "Where's Petie?" he asked. His Fadder put him down and went out to the supper table.

"Gee, Fadder's a brave guy. He talk up to the cop," said Johnnie. "He no let no cop scare him."

"He no let no cop scare him," said Joe.

"He no let no cop scare him," echoed Carlo. Carlo went up to Joe. "Where's Mudder?" he asked. "Where's Petie?"

Joe looked around anxiously.

Johnnie stopped him. "You no tell Carlo nuttin'," he said. "He just a keed. He no keep quiet." Carlo's eyes blackened with tears. "See, he all time cry like a baby. He ain't old enough to be a brave guy like Fadder and Pete and me."

"And me," said Joe.

Johnnie went on out to the supper table. Joe started after him. He turned around and looked back at Carlo. Carlo rubbed dirt into his wet eyes. Joe went over and put his arm around Carlo. Joe was the baby before Carlo.

"They all right, Carlo," he said. "Mudder no seeck. She no in the hos-peat-al. She be back pretty soon."

"Where's Petie?" whispered Carlo.

"You keeds come out here and eat," ordered Annie from the doorway. Annie was Mudder instead of Seester when Mudder was gone. They obeyed her. Carlo mopped up his soup with his bread.

"He say he put Petie in jail," laughed Johnnie, chewing at his bread.

"He no put Petie in jail," began Carlo anxiously. He remembered blackly the man slapping at his hip pocket.

"You bet he no put Pete in jail. Pete keel him if he try putting Pete in jail," said Johnnie.

"Pete keel him," said Joe.

Carlo shook his head. Nobody paid any attention to him. Fadder was talking about taking some things to Mudder.

"I take 'em," said Johnnie.

"I take 'em," said Joe.

"No, no, no, no, no!" said Fadder. Annie would take them in the morning. The hunky man hadn't talked to Annie much. He wouldn't remember her. Annie would go up to the five-and-ten shopping in the morning. Then she would slip down to Mudder with the things.

"By the river!" said Carlo, remembering joyously. He had been just a very little boy the time before. He and Mudder and Petie had lived down by the river in another house, a littler house. Petie had lain on the floor with him and played train with pictures cut out of the newspapers. After while they had come back home again.

Fadder and Annie and Johnnie and afterwards Joe all shouted fiercely at Carlo. Carlo shushed quickly and again tears came into his eyes. He sobbed and gulped at his soup. The hunky man was going to shoot Petie and no one would tell Carlo where Petie was staying so Carlo could go warn him. Now Carlo had remembered and they all yelled at him to keep quiet.

Fadder was talking again to Annie and Johnnie. Johnnie might be trailed if he took the things to Pete. The detective would know Johnnie. Johnnie was a big boy, fourteen years old. It might get Johnnie in trouble. Annie still wore her hair down her back. The detective wouldn't suspect her of nothing. She could slip down in the morning.

Supper was over. Carlo sat on the back step and chewed his gum and smelled his rose. The sky was black and starred. The dance hall over the corner store made noisy music. Carlo sang a little song to the music. He sang it quietly so that Annie washing the dishes couldn't hear.

I go down to the river and tell Petie. I tell Petie to run away so the man can't shoot him. I tell Petie to get his gun and run across the river so the man can't keel him.

Early in the morning when Fadder and Johnnie went to the market stall, when Joe went to the summer school, when Annie went to the five-and-ten, Carlo could find his way to the river and tell Petie. A sudden fear gripped Carlo. Suppose the hunky man went down tonight to shoot Petie. When a man was shot he laid down flat on his face. He didn't ever get up again. There was a funeral with a brass band and the church bell ringing and ringing and a rose fallen in the gutter.

If the man shot Petie, Petie couldn't ever come back and sit at the table and eat supper with them. He couldn't ever drive the Ford down to the playgrounds at noon and ride Joe and Carlo home. Carlo could never sit up in the front seat on Petie's lap and turn the steering wheel. Carlo felt the tears coming into his eyes again. He blinked them back. He wasn't a baby any more no matter what Johnnie said. He was going to warn Petie.

He slipped away from the doorstep, looking back from the fence to see if he were missed. Annie was still clean-

ing up. He climbed over the back fence. If he went the front way he might run into Johnnie and Joe and the other children. They would ask him where he was going.

He ran through the yards in the darkness, down to the street where the street cars ran. The windows of the pool hall laid a patch of yellow on the dark sidewalk. The lamp post light made a yellow circle to throw down on the nigger cop or the hunky white man if they stood beneath it.

Carlo ran in the opposite direction from the patch and circle of light. He looked warily behind him at each corner to see if the hunky man were trailing him.

A street car came clanging along on the tracks. Carlo boarded it. He was too small to pay carfare. He ran through the car quickly and up to the front where he stood in the dark by the motorman. When the car arrived at the crosstown intersection, he got off the car.

It was noisy at the intersection. Street cars were going back from whence he'd come, forward in the same direction, and up and down the other way. People were walking across the street in twos and fours and threes and ones. Automobiles were dashing up and down and around. There was noise and light and no little boys at all like Carlo.

Carlo knew he had got off at the right place. It was here you got off to go down to Fadder's market stall. It was here you would take a car to get to the river. He knew the direction. It was to his right. He was afraid to take another car for fear he might get the wrong one and be carried out of his way. He started trudging up the street in the direction of the river. He would know the street when he came to it. It was more like a road than a street. There were shambling houses on it and the river ran in front of the houses. He had been just a little boy but he remembered playing on the bank of the river. Petie would never come out and play with him

there. Petie would play with him in the house but he would never go out and play with him on the bank of the river. Carlo had to amuse himself when he was on the river. He would sing and splash sticks into the water and make mud pie houses. He had been sorry when he and Mudder and Petie had gone back again uptown to the big rickety house where they lived.

That had been before Maggie got married and Sam went away to work in another city. Maggie and Sam were bigger even than Petie. Carlo didn't remember them very well around the house. Now when Maggie came over she had a crying baby, a real baby, with her. Annie liked to hold the baby but Carlo always ran out the door when he saw Maggie coming.

Carlo trudged northward. The lights were less frequent. The noise quieted into a whisper. There were few automobiles. A street car only every long time made a snail of light. Carlo pressed close to the buildings so that no one would see him. He grew frightened of the great blackness of the buildings, of their still breathing. He ran out again along the curbing.

His little bare feet were tired. His eyes ached with sleep. But he had to go on. It was up to him to get to Petie before the hunky man did. Even now the man might be trailing after Carlo. He half-turned but there was nothing behind him except an interlacing of shadow.

The buildings became fewer. They were great hulking warehouses and they were darker and more fearsome. Carlo started to run to get past them. He stubbed his toe on a crack and it thumped. He felt the tears coming into his eyes but he pushed them back. He would not cry and have Johnnie say he was a baby. The flavor was long gone from his gum but he chewed on manfully.

His ragged coverall was wet from his journey and scaredness. A faint wind coming up made it cold against his body. But he trudged on to warn Petie.

Suddenly the bridge loomed up before him. Down below there was the river. He would have to go down a side street and get to the river bank. The side street was grim and formidable. Carlo caught his breath. There were no street lamps in that dark distance; the street lay clamped in darkness.

Somewhere down there was Petie. Petie didn't know that a man was out after him with a gun in his hip pocket. Carlo drew a deep breath. He remembered the rose in his pocket. He took it out and smelled it deeply. He closed his eyes and plunged into the darkness.

He hurried along the street between lines of close set evil-grinning houses. In one there was a thin cry. Carlo gripped his hands and ran. He ran past house after sleeping house. Finally he stopped short on a dark corner. He would have to get nearer the river. The river was down below. The house where Petie was, was down by the river.

Carlo was so worn out, he decided to rest a minute. His feet were stone bruised. His legs would not move. His eyelids were dropping. He sat down on the curbing and let his head rest on his knees.

There was the gray of before sunrise in the sky when he awoke. He peered up and saw a cop standing above him.

The cop smiled. "What you doing out here, kid?" he asked.

Carlo gave a startled stare at him. Carlo scrambled to his feet and ran blindly.

"Hey, wait a minute!" the cop called after him. Carlo did not dare look around. He ran and ran. The cop was after him. He could hear the heavy footsteps pounding behind him. Carlo's tired feet scraped over the dirty sidewalks. He stumbled, almost falling headlong. The rose tumbled out of his upper pocket. Carlo stopped. He could not go on and let the beautiful pink rose be

trampled by a cop's big black shoe. Carlo picked up the rose. The cop picked up Carlo.

"What's the idea of running away from me?" the cop asked kindly. "I got to take lost kids back to their mothers. Where were you going now?"

Carlo's eyes were blank. He shrugged. Never would the cop find out where he was going. He realized it all now. The cop had probably trailed him from the start. Bitterness surged into Carlo's heart. But he was no baby. He would not cry even if the cop had caught him. He would not tell anything.

"Where do you want me to take you? Where do you live?" asked the cop.

Carlo did not answer.

"What's the matter? Cat got your tongue?" the cop joked. "Well, we'll have to go up to the station and see if there's any calls for lost kids."

Carlo did not let tears come into his eyes. He suffered the cop to carry him. It was easier being carried than walking any more.

The station was near the market place. Carlo hid his face against the cop's coat as they went in. He did not want his Fadder to see him. His Fadder would lick him for being out all night. If he got to his Mudder she would understand how it was.

The cop sat Carlo down on the Chief's high desk. The Chief was not in. Some other cops were around. They gathered about and looked at Carlo. Carlo's eyes grew black but he did not cry.

"I found this kid asleep down on my beat," said the cop. "He won't tell me where he's from or nothing. Maybe the Chief'll know something about it."

"What's your name?"

"Where do you live?"

"How did you happen to get lost?"

Carlo gave no answer. They were trying to find out about Petie. He was no baby to tell them things.

The hunky man came in. "Where's the Chief?" he asked. He spied Carlo. The hunky man stepped forward eagerly. "Say, that's one of the Corallo kids," he said. "Where did you find him?"

Carlo's heart was bumping. He knew what the hunky man had in his hip pocket.

The policeman explained again.

"What were you doing down there?" the hunky man demanded of Carlo. Carlo, trembling, shrugged his shoulders.

"Listen here!" the man said and he shook his finger in Carlo's face. "Unless you tell me you'll get locked up behind those bars, do you hear?"

Carlo didn't want to be locked up. He wanted to get to Pete. He wanted to warn him. He wanted to find his mother and tell her about this man who was looking for Pete.

Carlo stared blankly at the hunky man.

The hunky man turned to the policeman who had brought Carlo in. "Listen, get somebody and look around that neighborhood for Pete Corallo. This is his kid brother."

Carlo opened his mouth. "I look for my Mudder," he said sadly. "I look for the hos-peet-al to find my Mudder."

"There won't be no use, Jack," said the cop who brought Carlo in. "I know all those people down there. There ain't any Eyetalians. They're all Belgiums and a few Poles. There ain't no Eyetalians there."

The hunky man turned again to Carlo. "Now listen, kid," he said. "I'm not fooling you a bit. You weren't looking for no hospital. You were down to that hangout where your brother and mother were. See? Now you

tell me where it is and I'll let you go. And if you don't — you'll get put in there, locked up for a long time, see?"

Carlo's black eyes darkened but no tears fell. He shrugged his shoulders.

"Hey, lay off, Jack," said the cop. "This is just a kid. Don't be scaring him that way. He's just a baby."

Carlo had not cried a wink. They wouldn't have thought he was a baby only his hair was still cut banged like a girl's.

"Baby or no baby, don't you see this is a chance to get Pete? It's perfectly plain that some one of them slipped down there last night and this kid was with them. He musta got lost down there. Come on now, kid. You don't want to be locked up back of them bars, do you? You tell me where I can find Pete and I'll let you go. Otherwise you're going back of them bars and stay locked up." The hunky man's voice was hard and mean.

Carlo felt a great fright. He could see through an open door those thick iron bars. He could see the bulge in the man's hip pocket. He met the man's eyes blankly, steadily. He shrugged.

The Chief came in. "Hullo, hullo!" he said. "Hullo there, Jack. Got Pete yet?"

"Not yet. The old lady came back this morning. Slipped in some time when no one was looking. Says she's been to the hos-peat-al. Like hell she has. She's been with Pete all right. Helping him to get away — blow town. Somebody must have tipped her off we were hot after him. See this kid? This is one of the Coral-lo's. McGilley found him down in his district."

"This morning, Chief, early."

"He won't open his head. Pete must have been laying low down there some place. This kid must have got lost from 'em some ways when they were getting Pete away and the old lady back home."

The Chief patted Carlo's shoulder. "You're a fine

big boy," he said in a kind voice. "How old are you?"

Carlo shrugged. He knew he was five years old but he wasn't going to say anything.

"How did you happen to be sleeping on the curbstone that way? Comfortable?"

Carlo shrugged again, fastening his blank eyes on the Chief.

"Come on now, won't you tell me about it?" coaxed the Chief. "I've got some candy for a nice boy. You don't live down there, do you?"

Carlo's stomach was hungry. He shrugged again. He remembered the rose and taking it out of his pocket smelled deeply of it.

One of the cops spoke. "He said he was looking for the hospital to see his mother."

"That so?" asked the Chief of Carlo.

Carlo opened his mouth. His eyes were large and guileless. "My Mudder seeek," he said. "I go to the hos-peat-al to see my Mudder."

"Your mother's all right now," said the Chief. "She's home again."

Carlo's eyes glowed. He struggled to get off the high desk. He could tell his Mudder about the man with the gun looking for Petie. His Mudder would tell Petie about it. She would warn Petie to run across the river and get away from the hunky man with the gun in his pocket. With his Mudder home again, everything would be all right. Carlo appealed to the cop who brought him in. "I got to go see my Mudder. My Mudder she home from the hos-peat-al. I got to go see her."

The cop set him down. The hunky man scowled and stood in their way. "You can't keep a kid here," said the cop. "Why don't you get some dope from the old lady or old Corallo himself?"

"You can't get nothing out of wops," said Jack gruffly. "Pete's maybe half-way to Chi by this time and

maybe he's in the house back of where you picked up this kid. I wish I'd been down there where you found this kid. I'd never brought him in. I'd followed him."

"Say, kid, when did you see Pete last?" he asked. "Do you remember who he was with? Nobody up on Fifth has seen him for weeks. Oh, no! The old lady hasn't seen him for months. Oh, no! I can't even find anybody else that was in on the deal. And you can bet one eighteen-year-old kid wasn't carrying off three car loads of furs alone. Not even Pete Corallo. When did you see Pete last?"

Carlo trembled at the fierceness of the man's tones. Tears were piled back of his eyes ready to come. He watched the man's hand carefully lest he reach into his hip pocket and pull out that barking gun. Carlo looked up at him bravely. He shrugged.

"See," said the hunky man fiercely. "That's the way they all are. This kid was with Pete last night. See?"

The hunky man snorted and walked over to the window.

"Come on, kid, I'll take you home," said the cop.

Carlo shook his head. "I know the way," he said.

"You're pretty little to be finding your way around the city alone," said the cop. He was a nice cop but Carlo did not trust him even now. "I don't want you getting lost again."

"I no get lost," said Carlo scornfully. "I ain't no baby." Proudly he repeated it. "I ain't no baby." They could not call him a baby again. He had talked up to the cops. He had defied the gun of the hunky man. He had not cried even when they were going to lock him up in the jail. And he had said no word of Pete.

Proudly Carlo walked down the station steps. He was no baby now. He sniffed ecstatically at the faded pink rose.

TWO POEMS

By GLENN WARD DRESBACH

A LEADER

In arguments he wore down sense with noise
And thought he won with other voices still.
His wife was trained to follow and his boys
Were cowed beneath the lashes of his will.
His horses pulled a double freight in fear
And aged too early, with their shoulders raw;
In church his singing made his neighbors hear
Massed thunders of inexorable law.

The very stubbornness of sod was turned
To riches that once his were bound to stay —
But when his wife's clipped flame no longer burned
His boys had grown enough to run away,
And, facing circumstance, he fought alone
Like some old ram that butts a wall of stone.

THE LEAVES HAD FILLED THE LITTLE SPRING

The leaves had filled the little spring
Until it flooded, washing clear
Enough to catch a bit of sky
Crossed by the glimmer of a wing
That hastened, late in leaving here.

It seemed to me, as I went by,
We smiled — the little spring and I —
As if we understood these things. . . .

And it had not been so, I guess,
If fallen leaves had been the less
Or if the sky had throbbed with wings.

THE WISH

By NELIA GARDNER WHITE

It had been going on a long time now — over a year, in fact. Under his very nose, too. Of course, if she hadn't had to be out in the store part so much, it couldn't have been managed. But she could always close the door in between and there were often whole hours when no one entered the store at all. If he asked who was out in the store talking, she would say,

"Oh, just Judd Leffler!" or "Gus Lankes, come to gossip!"

And, likely as not, Al would be sitting out there in the little alcove where the desk was, right while she was speaking. She could hardly keep from smiling to herself at such times. But, occasionally, John would look at her soberly when she answered him and fear would come over her in a tide and her heart would seem to throb in her throat. He'd always been a fool for the truth, John had.

When he'd been in the store, he'd never take any advantage of a salesman or a farmer, and there were times when it was easy to do this, too. It always made her impatient. If you didn't look out for yourself, nobody would. Now that she was running the store alone, they made more money — quite a lot more.

But about Al, she didn't know what John would say, if he knew about Al. Even sick as he was, he might do something. But a woman young as she was had to have some life. She couldn't wear herself out tending store and waiting on a sick husband and not have anything at all to pay her for it. Of course, if she'd known John was going to be sick this way, she wouldn't have married him. Well, maybe she would have, too. John had had a way with him. Young girls like she had been then always fell for a man like John, kind of sober and standoffish and good-looking like he was. A man like John was a kind of a dare. You wanted to see if you couldn't work him into not being so standoffish. She'd done it, too. When she

would get to thinking of the nights they had gone out on the lake, or sat back in the far corner of the park, she would feel queer and angry. She'd been a fool to think it would be like that after they were married. They hadn't got on very well, even after a few weeks. He hadn't liked it because she wouldn't let her old father come and stay with them part of the time.

"You don't know Pa," she'd told him. "He's like a burdock. You'd get awful sick of him. And I know well enough, once he got here, Harriet'd never take him again!"

"Well, he's an old man and he needs a home for his last years. I guess we could put up with it, Effie, and he seems to like it better here than he does at Harriet's, anyway!"

"Good reason why!" she'd told him. "Harriet's man treats him like a dog! He's not easy, like you, John!"

"Well, then, he must come here. You can't let the old man be wanting a home!"

But she hadn't had him. No, sir! He used snuff and he was pokey and helpless over his meals. You had to cut up his meat for him. No, how could she have done it, with the store on her hands and all? It wasn't her fault if he couldn't make himself content at Harriet's. Goodness knows, the week he died, she went over to Harriet's and sat up nights and cleaned and everything. But, after the funeral, on the way home, when she had cried, John had said,

"I wonder that you can squeeze out tears for a father that used snuff, Effie!"

And she had been so mad, she'd not spoken to him for three days. It had made a hardness between them ever since. Of course, she had loved her father, but that didn't mean she wanted him living with her, year in, year out, did it?

There was the farmer who traded in butter and eggs. She could always manage to make twenty-five or thirty cents on that trade. But John had caught her at it once.

"If somebody gave you their soul, you'd want to make a nickel on it!" he'd said to her.

You can see, it hadn't been very easy for her, living with a man who looked at things like that.

Once she'd sent down to Masser's by John for some silk stockings and when she'd opened the parcel, there'd been some mistake, and there were two pairs there.

"I'm going back over town—I'll take 'em right along!" John had said.

"Take 'em *back*!" she'd said to him. "Say, with all Masser charges for things, he's not losing a cent on selling two pairs for one! Take 'em back? You're crazy!"

He had just stood and looked at her in that provoking way he had, as if he thought she were the dust under his feet. Then he'd picked the stockings up off the counter and put them in his pocket, without even a paper on, and gone out.

He never liked to have her jolly the salesmen so much, either. But that was kind of natural, maybe, that he would feel jealous. You couldn't get those fellows sore, though. It was bad for the business. Only he would say things like—

"I should think you'd feel kind of cheap, kidding old Kratz as if you were about fifteen!"

And it would take half the fun out of visiting with Kratz, though she'd never stopped her jollying him because of what John had said. That would let John see he was boss and you couldn't let a man feel that or there'd never be any peace.

Even when he acted as if he loved her, he was queer.

"My God, Effie, why are you so beautiful?" he'd say.

Or he would take her out walking into the country after the store closed of an evening and when they came to the place where there was that double row of maples, he would take her in his arms and kiss her and kiss her till she was just tired out.

No, it hadn't ever been much fun.

And, after he'd fallen from the roof, and got paralyzed

so, it had been just awful. There were his meals to get ready and washing him and all that. And he had spells with his heart. Of course, he helped himself all he could, but it wasn't much, and evenings he seemed to want her to sit and talk to him, or read. She'd done it at first, too, but after a while it got so tedious she just couldn't stand it. So now and then she just had to run out to a movie or to see a neighbor, and night was her only free time. But he ought not to begrudge her that — 'twasn't as if she weren't around the store all day, right where she was at his beck and call.

It was funny about Al. She'd known him a long time but she'd never thought much about him, not as much as she had Kratz, really. Then he'd given her those earrings and that expensive perfume and now she was just crazy about him, and he about her, too. Al said she was like a doll — she guessed she was, with her curly yellow hair and red cheeks and all, though probably what made her cheeks red was tiredness from taking care of John and everything. She always felt comfortable with Al. You knew where you were at with him and when he kissed you he didn't look like one of those tragedy sheiks at the show. She hadn't meant to let him kiss her, but, after all, what hurt did it do?

But, some nights, after she'd been out with Al, she'd wake up out of a dream, shivering. She would dream that John got out of bed and came and stood looking down at her. She didn't know why, but that dream made her feel just sick.

She knew the very minute when she first began to wish he was dead. It was one morning when she had been shaving him and the razor had slipped and cut his cheek. His face was awful thin now and it was hard to shave him. And it made her nervous to have him watching her every second. He looked as if he blamed her for something and was waiting for her to say she was sorry. Well, God knew she wasn't sorry for anything, except that she'd been fool enough to marry him. But when she saw

that cut, it came over her in a kind of sick wave that she wished he was dead. It made the red rush into her face and he said to her,

"What's the blush for? Surely not on my account!"

"Surely not!" she'd said, quick enough. But her face had burned all day.

Well, she didn't want to feel that way. She couldn't help the thoughts that popped into her head. And, after all, it wasn't any wonder she wished it. He wasn't much help to her, and he certainly didn't care much of anything about her any more. But she kept away from him all day — just took his meals to him. He wanted her to read to him that night and, at first, she thought she would, but when she looked over at him, so flat and helpless, and saw the line of that cut, she couldn't do it.

"I've got to do an errand!" she said.

"Let it wait, Effie! I feel sort of low in my mind to-night!"

"I can't, John — honest. I've got to go — but Paul'll surely be in!"

"Oh, damn Paul!"

Paul was a carpenter and he was John's best friend. He came in often of an evening and read to John. She had never liked him much, nor he her, it seemed, but, now she was meeting Al out so much nights, it was a good thing he came. She could count on his staying till ten and she'd just get back then and say,

"I knew you had company, so I stayed out and visited with Laura a while. I guess I'd never get out for a breath of air, if it wasn't for you, Paul!"

Paul would give her a quiet, scornful look, but he never said much to her. He knew about her and Al, she was sure. But he thought too much of John to tell him. She counted on that.

But, after she wished that about John, she didn't feel so sure about Paul, or anything. She couldn't help wishing it, but it made everything seem different. Sometimes she even felt impatient and out of sorts with Al. He

seemed so contented with everything as it was. She got to thinking that if Al loved her like she did him, he would be wishing the same as she did. Once, when he was in the store, she read a piece from the paper to him about a woman who'd killed her husband.

"Darn fool," Al said. "I wonder why they think they can get away with it!"

"I suppose she just got so she couldn't stand it!" she said.

Al gave her such a queer look then.

She got to thinking of how she'd fix up the living room if John's bed weren't in there. She had to have it there so it would be handy to the store, but it made the room so ugly and untidy. Medicine sitting around and John's tray and all. If his bed wasn't there, she'd get a nice davenport for over by the window and she'd get some new drapes, too. And a new rug. Where Paul sat there by the bed of an evening and rubbed his heavy shoes, it was most worn through. Yes, she'd fix it up real pretty, if only she could.

And one day it came to her how nice it would be to have company in in the evening again — young folks to play cards and laugh and maybe have a drink or two. But, of course, as long as John was there, there wouldn't be anyone come in, just for a jolly evening.

One day John said to her,

"Well, I don't know as I can stand many more spells like today, Effie!"

He'd looked at her as if he'd wanted her to make a fuss over him then, but she couldn't.

"Oh, that wasn't so awfully bad!" she said. "Not after you took that medicine, anyhow!"

"It was bad enough," he said, and turned his head away.

That same day she thought — "If I didn't give him that medicine when a spell came on — or if I gave him too much — but, no, that's wicked to even think such a thing!" But, next morning, she thought — "It'd be a

mercy to him, really. It's no pleasure to him, living!"

That night she met Al up past the mill and they went 'round and sat on the bank by the old dam.

"Gee, I'm sick of this meeting you out back alleys and all!" she said to him.

He laughed and kissed her.

"Oh, this isn't so worse, baby doll!" he said.

Well, of course, it was kind of sweet when he kissed her and held her close like he did, but it was a nuisance, too, having to sneak off and make excuses and see Paul look at her that queer way every time she came in. It got on your nerves after a while. Al didn't seem to mind it but it was different with her. She had the store and the work and the worry of John always on her shoulders. Al didn't stop to think how different it was with her.

The next day John had another spell and she had to keep folks waiting in the store while she rushed in and tended to him.

"Take your time, Mrs. Fenner!" they said to her.

She gave John the medicine. As soon as he was a little more comfortable, he said,

"Who's out in the store?"

"Oh, Mr. Petty and Anna Lasker! . . . I got to rush back — you all right now, John?"

"Yeuh. Mr. Petty and Anna Lasker, eh?"

"Yes. I got to go, John!"

"Mr. Petty and Anna Lasker, eh?"

"What's the matter with you, John? You losing your mind? That's what I said!"

"Yeuh. I know you *said* it, Effie!"

She knew she gave him a hateful look then. A pity he couldn't believe her after all she did for him and all she gave up for him! Why, if she hadn't run in as she had just now, he'd have been dead! She couldn't even answer him, she was so mad.

After a while, Al came in. They went back into the little alcove and he kissed her. John called her and she went in to him, her cheeks red.

"Mr. Petty and Anna Lasker, eh?" he said to her.

Of course she had to make some answer to that, though all of a sudden she trembled like anything.

"Say, what's got into you? What's all this piffle about Mr. Petty and Anna? You act awful funny!"

"I feel awful funny, Effie!"

"You sure must! Well, don't call me again without you really want me!"

He gave her that look and then she had a notion she ought to stop and kiss him or something, so he wouldn't be so suspicious, but with him looking at her so, it was as if she were bound to the spot and couldn't go to him. Back in the store, Al tried to pull her back into the alcove again and kiss her but she wouldn't let him. Gee, but she felt awfully nervous today! She felt cross at Al, too.

"Oh, leave me be! Leave me be!" she said.

"The door's shut!"

"Yeuh. I know it. But I feel like he can see right through it! Anyhow, I can't leave it shut. He might have another spell!"

He had another spell that afternoon. He'd never had two in one day before. She felt as if her feet were slow getting to him and when she got the medicine ready it was as if some weight were on her hands. But she gave it to him. Paul happened in right afterwards.

"That medicine must be pretty powerful, to bring him to like that!" he said.

"I guess 'tis, all right," she told him. "It'd kill a body, as much as there is in that envelope!"

She gave him a cold stare. You had to look at him that way or he made you feel like John did, small and cheap. But she didn't have anything, really, to feel cheap about. She was doing everything she could for John. Everything. And, as to Al, that was her own private business.

After Paul went that afternoon, she went in to John and found him with his head turned away. His book lay beside him, pages down to the coverlet.

"You all right now, John?" she said.

He turned and looked at her and his look was terribly queer. It made her feel sick and scared.

"Yes, I'm all right now," he said.

"You act funny."

"Yeuh? Well, I've had news, but I'm all right now."

"News? What d'you mean?"

"News."

She knew she ought to insist on hearing what the news was but she couldn't go on. She knew what it was. He'd found out about Al.

"Well, if you don't want to tell me, I'll have to get back to the store!"

"I'd just as leave tell you, Effie, if you want to hear!"

"Sure, I do — but, wait a jiffy . . . somebody came in!"

She almost ran into the store. No one was there and she leaned against the counter, trembling and sweating.

"I've got to stop acting so silly and scared!" she told herself. "Even if he does know, he can't do anything! There isn't a thing he can do about it!"

Al telephoned and she closed the door in between.

"Down by the dam tonight, baby doll?"

"Oh, I don't believe I can!"

"Sure you can! Why not?"

"Well, John's not so good. He's had two spells to-day!"

"You're awfully concerned all of a sudden!"

"Well — oh, I'll come, but I can't stay long!"

"So long — baby!"

At supper time, John said, "Don't believe I want anything."

"You feel worse since you had that spell?"

"No, I feel better."

"Why don't you eat then?"

"I just don't feel hungry. . . . Sit down a minute, Effie, by me."

She didn't dare not to but she felt as nervous as a witch.

"You're awfully pretty, Effie."

"Pretty! I look as dragged out as a picked chicken!"

"You'll never look dragged out. You're awfully pretty!"

"Why all the compliments?"

"Why not?" His eyes, so sunken in his long thin face, mocked her gently.

"Oh, you! I never can understand you, John!"

"Well, never mind! I guess I understand myself all right — and you, too, Effie!"

"I wonder!"

"Well, I guess I'll go to sleep now. Give me a kiss, Effie?"

His eyes were so knowing. They mocked her so. It was just as if he said — "You don't dare kiss me!"

She knew she had to do it but, when she bent, her lips just brushed his cheek. It was no kiss and she knew he knew it.

She went out on the steps and sat till she saw Paul coming. She went down the walk at the side of the store to meet him.

"John's asleep but he'll want to be waked up!" she told him. "I'm going over street for a few minutes if you're going to be with John!"

"All right, Effie."

Al was down by the dam.

"You were pretty snippy over the phone, baby!"

"Well, I couldn't help it. I'm tired of running down here to meet you. And I have to stick around when John's so bad!"

He laughed.

"Well, I do. I've got to get back now. There's just Paul there. . . . I got to get back!"

"Aw! Kiss me, baby! That's better!"

"Honest, Al, I got to get back! I told Paul I wouldn't stay! You walk along with me!"

"Say, what's the big idea?"

But he walked along Mill Street with her. They came near the store.

"Come on 'round to the steps. If Paul is there, we can sit out by the back door a minute yet!"

But then the door was open and there was Paul running toward them like a crazy man.

"Why, Paul! . . . What is it — is John worse?"

Paul had hold of her arm and was pulling her along toward the door.

"Al, you got to come, too!" she said.

"Yes, Al — you come, too!"

Paul's voice was queer, awfully queer.

"What's the idea?"

The door was open and she could see Mrs. Bundy from next door.

"I ain't coming in," Al said.

"Yes, you are," Paul told him.

They were inside the door. There was the outside blackness, then pitiless light all around them. She wanted to ask if John had had another spell, but she could not make any sound. Mrs. Bundy was weeping. Then she knew that John was dead. Dead. He lay there so still. He was dead. She knew she should run to him, show her grief which, in reality, rushed over her in a terrible tide. But she could not move. Something bound her.

Then Paul was talking — "My friend — my friend, John!" he kept saying; then he was leaning toward her, crouching down like he was mad.

"You did it!" he shouted. "You did it, you Jezebel, you! But you left the envelope — you oughtn't to have left the envelope!"

"I — I . . ."

"And just this afternoon you told me — 'What's in there'll kill a man!' you said!"

She put her hand out in a half-gesture toward Al but her fingers came upon nothing.

"I — I never —"

"You never, eh?" His voice cracked in pitiful grief. "Murder a man — and then go out and cuddle on the creek bank! Judas Priest! . . . *John! John!*"

Oh, how could he? *Was* that envelope empty? She wanted to look but could not stir. Yes, it must be, for there was John. . . . Then she knew — knew sharply. John had done it himself. He had heard about her and Al — and he'd done it. But they thought it was her. She made herself look toward Paul but Paul's eyes were on her in scorn and hate and his face was twisted up so. She'd never get him to believe. She looked at Mrs. Bundy. Mrs. Bundy was looking at her as if — as if she were a *bad* woman. She looked at Al — and Al was looking at her sneeringly. At John she could not look. But Al — Al — when he had so often kissed her and said he loved her! Hate and fear took hold of her and she cried out,

" 'Twas him! 'Twas him! "

For just an instant her terror flicked to Al's eyes, then grew cold.

" 'Twasn't me that was forever wishing him dead!" he said loudly.

Al, too.

Now she looked at John. There was nobody else. He looked different, not so tired and discouraged as he always had these last years — kind of rested and peaceful, as if, now, he had the laugh on her and it wouldn't matter to him what she did any more. If — if only she'd kissed him when he'd asked her to. If only — if only she hadn't wished . . .

She put her arm up across her face and dared not take it away to meet again those eyes, accusing her.

THE SKETCH BOOK

ON BEING A STENOGRAPHER ON JACKSON STREET

By JOAN DARETH PROSPER

Being a stenographer on Jackson Street, Seattle, is one thing; being a stenographer on, say, University Street of the same city is one thing. Between them lie twelve blocks of cement paving and a substantial portion of our New World civilization.

A stenographer on University Street is a girl with Ideals. She has learned which operators give the correct marcel, which shops offer gowns, at only a trifle more than her bi-monthly salary, which make her look as though she had never heard of Gregg and knew Underwood only as a Representative from the state of Ohio. She does not have to ask the Etiquette Editor which fork. Her social aspirations are clearly defined; she prefers naval officers.

As one leaves the immaculate precincts of uptown and turns south, one does not at once feel an awareness that anything is going to happen. Ten blocks bring a suspicion, a delicate, bluish sort of premonition that all is not well; two more, and the pedestrian is confronted by the realization that Ideals will suffer in this neighborhood.

Jackson Street is a region of depots and thirty-five-cent-a-day steam-heated-free-bath hotels, strictly confidential medicos and Hebrew dealers in what-have-you. It swarms with grave Japanese infancy. It reeks of gas fumes, is sired by laundry steam and married to the subtle perfumings of the meat packing industry.

Being a stenographer on Jackson Street has little to do with glassy-swift elevator flights at 9:00 a. m., with discreet forty cent lunches at one and withdrawing of hushed footsteps from the shrine of the President of the Com-

pany over a subdued "Goodnight, Mr. Gorhaddam," at five.

The brown paper bag may have lost caste in other sections, but on Jackson Street it comes into its own. From the left hand desk drawer, natural habitat of the carried lunch, emerge odors — pungency of oranges, an olfactory hint of Swiss cheese. One suspects the proximity of rye bread, and twelve o'clock proves the suspicion to have been well founded. From desk to desk over the sandwiches, in this region where men are chief clerks and women wear brown paper cuffs, conversation flows untrammelled. Local politics emerges with the rye bread and eugenics with the doughnuts. The Mexican situation goes into the wastepaper basket along with the banana peel.

The intelligentsia of Jackson Street are characterized by a very certain naivete. A simplicity that scorns modernism emanates from the paper lunch bag and gets into the atmosphere at this hour. One discovers the shipping clerk to be a potential flutist. He carries his instrument into the stockroom and practices chromatic scales unabashed until one o'clock. The Littlest Stenographer, with a wrinkle of concentration crisscrossing her forehead, is reading "Pelleas and Melisande," having only just discovered Maeterlinck. Thus are old beauties reborn on Jackson Street.

As already suggested, your south-end secretary does not end the working day on tip-toe at the door of a sanctum. We do not believe in sanctums in this neighborhood. More likely than not the stenographer refers to her superior in tones more suggestive of candor than awe as "Bill," and if she does not throw the completed work from her desk to his at the stroke of five, it is only because she doubts her aim. Her attitude is that the day's work had to begin, it's ended now, thank God, and that's that!

Consider the social aspects of Jackson Street. We do not claim to be "just one big happy family," in the startlingly original diction of the luncheon club speaker. Frequently we are not at all happy — and when we are miserable we are frankly so. But we share our sorrows to a degree that is undreamed of a dozen blocks north where it would be a grave social error to admit that anything wearing blue denim could be human.

Inor, our Swedish janitor, is one of those persons on whom Nature seems to have experimented — rashly. Looking candidly at Inor, the gentlest comment one can think of is that mistakes are bound to happen. We, the by-day inhabitants of the warehouse the floors and wastebaskets of which fall under his care — especially those of us possessing a keen eye for beauty — wish that Inor would visit his dentist more often. Unanimously we feel that he betrays our trust in the matter of window washing, and we cannot agree with his evident views as to the number of paper towels it is our right to consume. With Inor the question is not *when* to clean a wash-room but whether to clean at all, and he leans heavily toward a negative decision.

These matters we regret. And yet, when Inor's wife . . . ah yes, such things happen on Jackson Street as elsewhere. She was a little vapid blonde thing with her first baby, and rumor would have it that the sailor who ran away with her was a handsome young brute. Such an old story — but new to Inor as fresh-sprinkled blood is new. All Jackson Street turned its eyes away from the grotesque shambling figure of the warehouse janitor that day — not in shame, but in pity.

Not long afterward a second tragedy came among us.

"What's the matter with Dad?" asks someone as the office begins to rub sleep from its eyes at eight-thirty of an April morning.

Dad, you must know, is the stoop-shouldered, wrinkled

little man who runs our wheezy elevator at a snail's pace between first and sixth floors. In eight years Dad has not once found it necessary to change the wording of his jocund morning greeting, nor of his five o'clock good-night. The joke which he first told us in 1920 may be a little frayed, for it has seen hard service, but there is plenty of wear in it yet. Dad does not believe in verbal extravagance; all of his conversational efforts could be nicely taken care of on a half dozen of rubber stamps.

"Well, what is the matter with him?" you ask. "I noticed myself that he looked rather like a postscript, and he forgot to say that this is a very fine morning for the South end."

"If it's his lumbago again," chirrups the Littlest Stenographer, "I'm going to make him try Luben's oil because I knew a man once who had a horse that . . ."

"It isn't lumbago," snaps our assistant bookkeeper, who is having difficulty with her trial balance because the final waltz of the Clerks' Union Get-Together dance was played at three a. m. "It's a cold — everybody's having colds this month. There were so many sniffles at the dance last night I couldn't hear the music. I'm going straight out with a glass of water and a couple of quinine pills and stand there until he takes them."

Our assistant bookkeeper has a firm chin; we are certain that Dad and the quinine will make connections. She returns shortly, and there is a pinched expression about her lips; one wonders fleetingly whether she, too, may not be in need of quinine.

"He isn't sick . . . it's his son, the one that drove the ice truck . . . an accident last night."

"Hurt much?" asks the Littlest Stenographer, sharpening her pencils.

"Dead." And the assistant bookkeeper returns to her trial balance in silence — a silence that hovers over the office for hours. Somebody very quietly takes up a col-

lection. There will be flowers, yes, he will have plenty, that husky youngster who drove the ice truck, but they will not bring back the old jokes to Dad's lips, not for many a day.

A block and a half down the street above a narrow doorway hangs a weather-soiled boot, symbol of the shoe repairing trade the world over. Jackson Street calls him Joe, he of liquid brown eyes, the melancholy whiskers, the undenied art for cobbling — because his name, as printed across the window with only two letters missing, is of such vowel fecundity as would prove the despair of even a braver street. Joe is ours due to the generosity of the land made famous by Sappho and half soles. As regards shoe leather, Joe certainly knows his onions, and if we suspect that he is not a stranger to his garlic either — well, live and let live is the slogan of the district.

It is to Joe that the Littlest Stenographer slips out of an afternoon with a pair of ballet slippers that have seen too many pas de chats. For do not be surprised should you learn by chance that the demure, blue-smocked person who pounds out "We appreciate your order and beg to advise that same will go forward promptly" by day, is a perspiring student of the dance by night; do not, if you are wise, be surprised at anything, on Jackson Street. A discreet patch, suggests the Littlest Stenographer. Yes, one of Joe's own peculiarly fascinating patches will be ready by tomorrow morning. A nice day, yes? A little windy, but very nice. Is she working hard? Better not work too hard. Until tomorrow, then, and a slipper made as good as new . . . plenty of wear yet in that slipper.

But tomorrow comes and the slipper is not ready. Joe is sorry. His wife was ill in the night and they have taken her to the City Hospital. There is a great deal to be done about a place with eleven children. Yes, he said eleven.

But, you object, pish, tush, and the like! This is America; this is nineteen hundred and what you will. People do not have eleven children. Ah, but this is not only America, it is also Jackson Street.

With earnest gestures and whiskers of an eloquence capable of surmounting all linguistic difficulties, Joe explains that cobbling boots and caring for eleven children are two opposing lines of endeavor. They do not, to put it baldly, mix. The Littlest Stenographer gathers that a hell of a time is being enjoyed by all. She recoils from a too vivid mental picture of the tiny back room which houses but cannot hope to suppress eleven children. She wonders if Joe has spilled something greasy in the bread-box or if he is at this moment letting the potatoes boil dry on the stove. She wonders if he understands that babies require talcum powder.

A chill gust of conscience blows over her, that she should be stepping out now into the crisp spring air, carefree, gloriously unencumbered, while Joe fights a losing battle with the varied exigencies of the cobbler's trade and sundry unmothered children. An apartment-bred stenographer who has never folded the domestic square, . . . could she? She whose knowledge of cookery is confined chiefly to that which may be said with a can opener, is it her duty to storm the walls of Joe's dilemma? Not quite, she decides. Yet for Joe's sake the sunshine which was wantonly sweet before, now wears a hint of shadow, and more soberly than she came she walks back to the warehouse. Such is the fellowship of Jackson Street.

THE TWO HANDS

By RAYMOND WEEKS

Now that the logs burn less brightly on the hearth and our sweet Miss Annie has fallen asleep in her chair, let us fold ourselves on her lap and talk of old times back home. . . . Do you remember?

—Do I remember! I remember nothing else. It's there that Miss Annie was a baby — the loveliest baby in the world! It's there that we learned to wash her face and comb her hair — she was six then. Oh, the soft, black, abundant hair, and the pretty red ribbons! And we held the mirror for her, because she was so tiny that she couldn't see herself in her mama's big looking-glass.

—She always liked to look pretty, even as a baby. I never saw a more beautiful child.

—There wasn't any! And because she was beautiful, she loved all beautiful things, beginning with her mama —

—Peace to her!

—And her papa —

—Peace to him!

—And the flowers, and the great honest horses, and the big-eared dogs, and all the birds of heaven — she loved them all.

—And they loved her! You remember how carefully Billie, the big plow horse, used to walk when they held her on his back — she wasn't more than three. Yes, all creatures loved our Annie. And the boys! Why! she wasn't thirteen before they adored her!

—And by the time she was sixteen, the men too adored her.

—When there was a party at our house of a summer evening and Miss Annie moved about the yard welcoming the neighbors, the men's hearts trembled.

—Yes, men would have loved her for her beauty alone,

or for her kindness alone, but seeing the two united in one body, they adored her.

— Hers was the fatal beauty.

— Yes, but she was not cruel. Of all words, she most dreaded the word "No."

— She never really learned to say it. You remember how she used to disguise it, as in flowers — she was so kind! Think of the splendid men to whom she had to disguise that word!

— Do you know, men were handsomer in those days — handsomer and franker. They had deep voices. They wore beards. Their hand-clasp was genuine. Their word was as good as their bond. They did not talk so much as men do now, but they did not seem to be women in disguise . . . And what singers they were!

— *He* had a beautiful voice . . . How terribly she cared for him! You remember the lock of hair we cut off to give him when he rode away to the Far West. She never gave a lock to anyone else . . . I wonder what became of that lock. The plainsmen were rough, but not unkind. They must have buried it with him, somewhere in the endless desert . . .

— Hush! she might awaken. Let's speak of other things.

— Do you remember Miss Annie's horror of hunting? When she saw the limp body of a quail or prairie chicken or wild turkey, she used to weep. Hunting almost stopped in our section.

— And rightly. Hunting is murder.

— She preferred games and jolly sports. She used to watch by the hour where the boys were pitching quoits.

— I can hear the horseshoes clinking now.

— And she loved picnics and parties. She was always trotting about the big kitchen, making pies and cakes and puddings and baking bread. We did the work, but Miss Annie was with us . . .

— And dancing! How she loved dancing!

— Especially to see others dance. Ah! the old times

— the parties, the dances, the house-warmings, the barn-raisings! Sometimes there was a fiddle —

— Or, if not, a guitar, or a French harp —

— Or a jewsharp —

— Or nothing but the whistling of the boys and the singing of the girls —

— And the clapping of hands and the stamping of feet —

— And the cry of the leader: “Chassez! . . . Cross back to places! . . . Balance! . . . Swing your pardners!” And how we loved the cry: “All hands round!”

— In the matter of hands, there was much done. Think of the quadrilles and the Virginia Reel!

— Yes, often in the dance, I felt myself pressed on my side, and was sure that on your side —

— Someone was pressing me! Yes, no doubt, but elsewhere Miss Annie would not have allowed it.

— You are right, she would not have allowed it.

— Just the same, it may be said that you and I had our share of being sighed over —

— Vowed to —

— Pressed and kissed —

— Wept on —

— But there was no jealousy between us . . .

— Do you remember how at night, when we pointed to a star, it was not the star that the boys looked at, but us?

— Yet we were not trying to attract them.

— Quite the contrary. We had our orders. Miss Annie never sought admiration, but was always convincing boys and girls that they loved each other. How many couples we have fairly pushed into each other's arms!

— Do you remember the great party at the Montgall house?

— Do I!

— And the last one at the Turgeons'?

— Peace to many of them! Sweet remembrance to the few who remain!

— And where are others — Jennie, Bruce, Charley, Jim, Ida, Sadie, Greg, Lou, Jessie — where are they to-night?

— Peace to many of them, to the others remembrance of past times and old acquaintance!

— Was Lou happy?

— Perhaps. She married.

— And Ida?

— No. She never married.

— She had plenty of chances.

— Ah! the old times! How well we remember Brush Creek and the prairies beyond, and the Big Blue, and the Mormon Spring which boiled up near the Holloway house, and Cave Spring, where we used to stop the horses, as we drove up the hill to Westport!

— And Seven Oaks, and Goose Neck, and Sni-a-bar, and Cusenberry spring, whose name a foolish generation has changed!

— And the muddy roads.

— Oh, the red clay mud! I wish we were stuck in it this minute! Oh, why did Tom bring us to his old home in Kentucky!

— Do you remember the daisies: "He loves me, he loves me not?"

— And the mirror and the interpretation of dreams.

— Where are all the golden boys and girls?

— Do you know, I can think of the old times until I believe they never existed — that I dreamed them . . .

— How superb dogs are! — Their silky ears, their honest eyes!

— What makes you think of dogs?

— Oh, just from remembering all that was best in the old time.

— You are right. Dogs are loyal. They never forget, not though they be blind and paralysed!

— The closer misfortune follows you, the more your dogs love you.

— Old Caesar would know if we were there now, laying flowers on his grave.

— Indeed he would!

— The dogs here in Kentucky *aren't* dogs, when you compare them with dogs back home!

— I'd rather be a mud-turtle in the wilds of Missouri than a blooded horse in bluegrass Kentucky!

— This life in the old mansion is all very well, but I'd be perfectly content to go bare, if I could live a certain time over again . . .

— Where is the happy time when we were poor! . . .

— Do you know, I can hear all the sound of the old time? I can hear the intonation of every voice we knew. I can hear the quick step of a saddle horse coming down the road, and the chug of a heavy wheel on its axle . . . I can hear, faint and far away, the old songs . . .

— Everything of the old time, and so can I . . .

— Do you remember the first night Tom knelt by Miss Annie, and she sent us to touch his hair?

— How we trembled!

— Do you still think that . . . that she loved him?

— Hush! Tom was always so kind to her. Every morning when he came down stairs, he kissed her on the cheek, and often he kissed us . . .

— Except the morning when he did not kiss her, but took her in his arms and wept with her . . .

— The day they carried the baby away. We touched its tiny hands. They were cold, cold . . .

— Then there came the other two babies, first Irene, then Robbie. We raised them, we adored them. And then dear Tom—he was still young, one might say—

— Peace to him!

— After that, nothing but sorrow . . . Robbie's wife died . . . then later Robbie disappeared . . . No one now to call our Miss Annie by the sweet name of "Mama," just Robbie's two baby boys, who say "Grandma." They are lovely children, to be sure, and polite, but—

— They are not our Robbie. Oh, where is he? Will he never return? Why did he go away? The babies needed him — their mama had died — and Miss Annie needed him.

— I heard Miss Annie sob one night that he would never come home. That is all I know. . . .

— As for Irene, the name injured her. I never liked the name Irene — you know that. A girl with that name is always cold. What need had she to marry that Englishman and go away to England! And why did she not write oftener? Two brief letters to a mother like Miss Annie!

— Hush! If she had lived, she would have written often. Peace to her!

— So much trouble and so few to bear it — so many years. God leaves us here too long!

— Miss Annie has often been homesick of late — homesick for the old places. One night about three years ago, right after Robbie disappeared, I heard her sob as she lay crying on her pillow: "Why did Tom and I come to Kentucky?"

— She cries more and more, the dear heart, but she lets no one see it, except you and me. We understand. . . .

— You know the inlaid box — she doesn't ask us to open it any more. . . .

— In autumn, when she walks alone under the big trees, her black dress brushes softly over the dead leaves, and her white, white face has a look that no mortal ever beholds. . . .

— At such times, she carries the polished cane that belonged to Tom's father. She leans heavily on it — you and I know that — but if someone comes, she has us swing it lightly, as if it were a reed.

— Yet she does not do it to pose. No! She simply can not bear to sadden others. She has depths of kindness, our Annie! You remember her definition of courtesy: "Courtesy is doing what pleases you most."

—A rare and beautiful woman! And when she straightens up and smiles in the presence of others, it is more than herself that she represents. She is an epoch that has disappeared, and the adoration of a generation of men dwells in her as she walks among the leaves.

—Last summer — those days when she sat for hours on one of the benches under the trees, and a haze of sunlight sifted down and fell about her — there were moments when I could hardly endure it. Do you remember?

—Yes, I remember. . . .

—Have you noticed that it is always moonlight in Kentucky?

—Always moonlight?

—Yes. There is the moonlight which others see, and there is another.

—Another?

—Yes. In what others call the dark of the moon, if Miss Annie takes a walk, I become conscious that a moon is rising behind us — a low, full moon. Miss Annie's shadow seems to be projected ahead of us, dimly at first, then clearer and clearer. Among the trees stand groups of figures, silent but kindly — figures of our lost companions, beautiful girls, smooth-cheeked boys and bearded men, and among them, a little behind the others, I see *him*, looking at her as he did the last days before he rode away to the West. . . . Miss Annie sees them all. She notices her shadow, turns shivering to look for the moon, and sends me clutching at her heart. . . .

—I understand. There is such a moonlight in Kentucky. . . .

—Oh, when will Robbie come back? Where is he? Will he never return?

—Hush! Miss Annie is awakening. Let us lie silent in her lap. . . .

I'VE BEEN READING—

By JOHN T. FREDERICK

RAYMOND WEEKS' STORIES

I have long felt the especial importance and interest of the work of Raymond Weeks in the literary interpretation of the Middle West, but I was not without an element of surprise in the strong delight I found in his volume of collected stories, *The Hound-Tuner of Calloway* (Columbia University Press, \$2.50). Mr. Weeks' work maintains a very high standard; his volume is more impressive than are individual stories, which is something not to be said of most collections.

Since Mark Twain many fiction writers have dealt with middle western life, past or present, but few of them have included in their artistic equipment the element of humor. No fiction can adequately express human experience in the large without this element. The stories in Mr. Weeks' collection, many of them, have humor, kindly, joyous, genuine. I am profoundly glad for this, would almost place it first among Mr. Weeks' virtues as a writer, because in middle western books it is so painfully rare.

And tenderness; surely this is one of the most precious of literary qualities, and one of the hardest to find in modern literature. Readers of Cabell will remember that tenderness is included in the list of qualities in literature desiderated by John Charteris, in that eloquent chapter at the end of *Beyond Life*. Precisely the tenderness that Cabell refers to, and himself sometimes attains, is to be found in the title story of *The Hound-Tuner of Calloway* and in many others in this volume.

And there is beauty in this book, a richly observed beauty of human life, reflected in a style which has now the curious charm of such dialect as only an observer like Raymond Weeks could write, and now such harmony as only a poet like Raymond Weeks could attain. Of all the good things I can think of to wish for MIDLAND friends, few pleasures would be equal to reading and rereading *The Hound-Tuner of Calloway*.

THE FUTURE OF FARMING

Not the least diverting feature of a spectacular presidential campaign is the competition in rhetorical conciliation of the farmer. I am inclined to award the prize to the promise of Will Rogers, who agrees "not merely to relieve the farmer, but to cure him—of being a farmer". Those of us who own and work agricultural lands will do well to get what amusement we can from the campaign, for we are not likely to get much else. Meanwhile, we shall probably find more actual illumination of our problems in other forms of literature than in political speeches.

Here, for example, are two recent novels — both honest, both well written, and avowing in their very titles the intention of dealing seriously with American farming in its relation to two of our three most important crops: *Cotton*, by Jack Bethea (Houghton, Mifflin, \$2.00); and *Red Rust*, by Cornelia James Cannon (Little, Brown, \$2.50). Of these, *Cotton* is the more directly concerned with the economic questions of the present day. The author presents a vivid and on the whole a convincing picture of agriculture in the southern states, in relation to the growing and marketing of cotton. There are pages of statistics, and chapters of narration of actual farm practices. The solutions offered are somewhat too simple: cotton-growers will not cure all their ills by use of Mr. Bethea's two remedies, improved methods of production and controlled marketing. But on the whole this book is good journalism, and sound agricultural economics.

It is on the literary side that Mr. Bethea's performance is disappointing. His style is without distinction. He has sought to enliven his information by a liberal infusion of plot; but the incidents are hackneyed, the efforts to produce artificial suspense are painfully obvious, and the denouement is readily predictable from the first chapter. The characters might have been obtained from a theatrical costumer, for all the relation they possess to flesh-and-blood men and women; indeed, the costumer would have had them all in stock, for use in the melodramas played by tent-show stock companies. *Cotton* is worth reading, but it has little relation to literature.

Red Rust concerns itself directly with a biological problem which has an immediate economic bearing. Its central character is a Swedish immigrant who discovers by chance a remarkable head of wheat in his field, and becomes obsessed by the ambition to produce a strain of wheat perfectly adapted to the environment of his Minnesota community, including that most deadly of hazards, the "red rust" from which the book takes its name. He works blindly at first, later in the partial light afforded by a reading of Darwin; singlehanded at first, later with the devoted coöperation of the woman he marries. He dies at the moment of success; we are not quite sure that he knows that he has succeeded.

It was a fine and original creative achievement to recognize the dramatic possibilities of such material as this, to perceive its spiritual significance. It is an even finer achievement to have used the material in a novel so genuine and moving. The characters in *Red Rust* are real, and their lives have meaning. The minor characters are presented with especial vitality. It is in certain aspects of the delineation of the major characters that

the novel falls short of greatness. Either through timidity or from a sense of the abundance of her material, Mrs. Cannon has failed to make us know Matts Swenson and his wife quite so completely and intimately as we want to know them. They remain just a bit two-dimensional, pleasing and colorful, but too monotonously associated with such definite attributes of character as kindness and devotion. We need especially to know more of what might be called the negative side of Matts' character, in order to find his story as profoundly significant as it might have been made.

A similar slight inadequacy is to be felt in Mrs. Cannon's treatment of the setting. It is touched appreciatively, often poetically; but it is not given the authentic and powerful individuality which the northern Minnesota landscape deserves.

Yet *Red Rust* is a novel of high and genuine distinction, which will bring a new vision of some of the dramatic elements in farm life to its readers.

Another new novel of high literary merit which might be said to deal with a farm problem is *The Happy Mountain* by Maristan Chapman (Viking, \$2.50). This book is poetically conceived and poetically written. It is far from the avowed concern with economic issues which we find in *Cotton* and to a less extent in *Red Rust*. But the story it tells is that of a farm boy who leaves his home community, driven by the desire to see the world, and eventually returns to his mountain farm to stay. And in the going away, if not in the returning, this story is representative of the most acute farm problem of all. Social and economic forces are combining to draw nearly all of the more intelligent young men and women from American farms to the towns and cities; and it is hard to see what the future of agriculture may be without them.

But Maristan Chapman is solving no problems in *The Happy Mountain*. She is not even stating them. She is telling the story of Waits Lowe, the mountain boy, descendant of generations on the same farm, inheritor of a traditional culture, and of his brief experimental invasion of another world and return to his own. The book is a delicious experience for the sensitive reader, largely because of the language in which it is written. Mrs. Chapman has used the richly flavored vocabulary and imagery of the mountain speech not only in the conversation of her characters but also in the body of her narrative. The result is a book in which every page is an adventure. Added to this is the charm of her delicate and authentic projection of the setting, and of her strong and sympathetic delineation of varied characters.

But the essentially poetic conception of her central character, and perhaps the poetic richness of her language as well, keep

Mrs. Chapman's novel from attaining quite the strength which might have been possible for it. The book reaches too promptly and easily an extraordinary height in both phrasing and feeling. Thereafter it lacks reserve, and does not rise to the demands of later and more dramatic incidents. The effect is a loss of basic rhythm of emotional emphasis, and the book becomes to some extent simple narration rather than drama. But this does not lessen the intrinsic charm and significance of its language and its people. *The Happy Mountain* is a fine reading experience.

I was somewhat surprised to find a discussion of the future of farming in another book of very different type. This is a slender volume in the "Today and Tomorrow" series, *Lucullus, or The Food of the Future*, by Olga Hartley and Mrs. C. F. Leye, (Dutton, \$1.00). I picked this up expecting to enjoy an imaginative account of the cookery and menus of future generations; and something of this sort the book does indeed contain. But most of the writers' attention is given to the production and distribution of food stuffs in the future, rather than to their preparation for the table. It is pointed out that an increasingly large part of the population, both in England and America, produces no food, but only materials to be exchanged for food. Hence our civilization is dependent for sustenance upon a decreasing fraction of the population, and upon increasingly intricate and elaborate methods of distribution. It is further true that not only the great urban centres are at the mercy of these complicated means of distribution, but also small towns and villages and even the agricultural communities themselves. In Iowa trains carrying livestock to Chicago to be slaughtered meet other train of refrigerator cars bringing dressed meats back to be sold to the very farmers who raised the beef and pork which has travelled a thousand miles, perhaps, between their feedlots and their tables. The rural community described by Mrs. Chapman in *The Happy Mountain* is self-sufficient, producing not only its own foodstuffs but its own textiles and leather. But such communities, which could survive without the cities, are extremely rare in present-day America, and probably will soon cease to exist.

The authors of *Lucullus* foresee for England the necessity of the restoration of a larger part of the population to food-production. But in America it seems likely that the depletion of farm population will go on for some time, and that agriculture will gradually assume the social outlines of the great industries: a matter of corporate or at least absentee ownership, of delegated management for profitable production as a sole aim, and of hired and highly mechanized labor. Most Americans who have lived and worked upon the land will agree with me that this prospect is not a happy one.

A MAN OF PEACE

Arnold Levenberg, A Man of Peace (Simon and Schuster, \$2.50), is the first novel of the eminent dramatist, David Pinski. The book displays certain qualities which may well be the result of the author's study and mastery of the problems incidental to writing for the theatre. Personal description is all but wholly absent, for example. Furthermore, there is a readiness to deal directly and fully with important incidents, a freedom from the evasion of difficulties, so common in novel-writing, which bespeaks the dramatist.

Arnold Levenberg interested me first of all as a serious study of American thought and feeling during the World War. We have had in recent years a few honest and considered novels dealing with the experience of Americans abroad during the war. We have had almost nothing presenting with comparable honesty and seriousness of intention the effect of the war on those who remained at home. In this sense *Arnold Levenberg* is a piece of literary pioneering, and a highly worthy one. The whole course of Arnold Levenberg's reaction to the struggle is truly representative of the experience of many thousands of Americans of intelligence, sensitiveness, and a degree of independence of judgment.

The novel is by no means lacking in individualization of its central character, however, and this is largely due to the story of his relations to four women of widely varying character and interests, which is interwoven with the story of his attitude toward the war. These women are characterized firmly and brilliantly. They live for the reader, and they make the book absorbing. But the highest achievement of the novel is in its revelation of Arnold Levenberg's gradual discovery of himself. The sub-title, "A man of peace", does not refer to the war alone, but to his whole attitude toward life. He is one of those who prefer to turn their attention inward, upon the narrow circles of their own lives, who are in no way genuinely desirous of expressing themselves to the world. Such men and women are rare in fiction, but common in reality. That is one of the reasons why this is an original and a significant novel, in addition to being a highly competent one.

BAMBI

Bambi, A Life in the Woods, by Felix Salten (Simon and Schuster, \$2.50) is an imaginative interpretation of animal life, belonging to the general group of books represented by *Tarka the Otter*, which I reviewed in THE MIDLAND a few months ago. This time a deer is the central character, and what the publishers call "the enchanting wood-lawn that frames the waters of the

Danube" is the setting. It is a book of genuine charm, with some rare fantasy, bits of quiet humor, and moments of intense emotion. Human thought and speech are freely ascribed to all beings of the forest, with the result that occasionally for a page or two the dialogue comes perilously near to a suggestion of the conventional bedtime story of Willy the Woodchuck and Sammy the Squirrel. From such bogs of meaningless sentimentality the author's wit and good sense promptly rescue it, with the effect of often very amusing characterization of woodland creatures. But as a whole *Bambi* is slight. It has not one-tenth the literary significance of Henry Williamson's massive and searching drama of non-human experience.

Diversey, by MacKinlay Kantor (Coward-McCann, \$2). Those who know MacKinlay Kantor only through the medium of some of his poems will be agreeably surprised that he can write a first novel as readable as *Diversey*. Those who know this young writer not at all may find a few hours' abstraction in a tale of Chicago which moves swiftly through a succession of hair-raising incidents to a rather jumbled climax and dies down in a fretful conclusion, wherein some questions are left unanswered.

Diversey is concerned with the adventures in love, politics and gang wars of Marry Javlyn, a young country newspaperman who comes to Chicago to seek work on one of the city dailies. This he fails to find. But in a rooming house on Diversey Boulevard he meets Abe Wise, a gangster in hiding, who in return for a favor uses his political influence to get Javlyn a job in the County Building. There, too, he finds Josephine Ruska, an appealing little product of the west side slums, who becomes his mistress.

From that point the novel moves on in highly colored jerks through Josephine's abandonment of Marry because of the "other woman," the gory assassination of Wise, and other episodes which hold interest despite some lack of continuity. Javlyn establishes a friendship with "J.R.P.", the great columnist (a thinly disguised R.H.L. of the Tribune Line O'Type), and there is some good, if impressionistic, recording of newspaper atmosphere and the inner lives of column contributors. At the conclusion we are uncertain whether or not a remade and somewhat cultured Josephine will return to Marry.

Whatever the loopholes in structure, one is inclined to accept the book as a pretty truthful picture. *Diversey* sound like and is Chicago, for all the seemingly melodramatic gang killings and

gross political machinations. The gang stuff is better than it sounds—really a literal transcription of what has often taken place. As for the political angles, it would be interesting to hear the comments of the County Building ring if some of them should happen to read this novel. Several could hardly fail to recognize themselves in the unvarnished characters Mr. Kantor presents. The dialogue in part is a sort of Chicagoese which reads naturally and easily. The characterization is well handled and one wishes there were more prose of Mr. Kantor's making at hand. *Diversey* is also interesting as one of the first publications of the new firm, Coward-McCann.

P. S. W.

BIOGRAPHICAL

DOROTHY BELLE FLANAGAN is a young Kansas City writer, a graduate of the School of Journalism of the University of Missouri. Her poems have appeared in a number of magazines, but *Brave Guy* is her first story to find publication.

GLENN WARD DRESBACH is well known to readers of *THE MIDLAND* and to American poetry lovers in general. His new collection of poems, *Star-dust and Stone*, has recently won the publishing award of the Poetry Society of Texas, and will appear this fall under the imprint of the P. L. Turner Company of Dallas, Texas.

NELIA GARDNER WHITE is a well-known short story writer. Her story *Toby Hatch* was published in *THE MIDLAND* of October, 1927. She lives at Buffalo, New York.

JOAN DARETH PROSPER is known to readers of *THE MIDLAND* as a contributor of poems to earlier issues. Her home is at Kirkland, Washington.

RAYMOND WEEKS, a member of the department of Romance Languages at Columbia University, has been a frequent contributor to *THE MIDLAND*. He is the author of *Boys' Own Arithmetic* (E. P. Dutton) and of *The Hound-Tuner of Calloway* (The Columbia University Press), and of other volumes and many uncollected articles.

